

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An operation apparatus for a drive system for a vehicle that includes an engine, a transmission, and a passenger compartment, the operation apparatus comprising:
5 a gearshift operator arranged in the passenger compartment;

an engine operator arranged near the gearshift operator; and

10 a shutter for covering the gearshift operator and the engine operator.

2. The operation apparatus according to claim 1, wherein movement of the vehicle is enabled when
15 communication between the vehicle and an authorized key is established, the operation apparatus further comprising:

a drive circuit for driving the shutter to cover the gearshift operator and the engine operator when the engine is stopped and the communication between the vehicle and the
20 authorized key is not established and for driving the shutter to expose the gearshift and engine operators when the communication is established.

3. The operation apparatus according to claim 1,
25 wherein the gearshift operator and the engine operator each includes a switch for generating a signal representing the present operation state.

4. The operation apparatus according to claim 1,
30 wherein the vehicle includes an instrument panel, and the gearshift operator is arranged in the instrument panel and includes an operation member operated to switch gearshift ranges of the transmission, and the operation member is

normally located at a neutral position, operated and moved to an upward position or a downward position from the neutral position, and returned to the neutral position after being operated.

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5. The operation apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the gearshift operator includes a plurality of switches, each associated with at least one of a plurality of gearshift ranges of the transmission.

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6. The operation apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the plurality of switches includes a gearshift switching switch for switching the gearshift ranges of the transmission in a sequential manner and a parking switch operated to switch the transmission to a parking range.

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7. The operation apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the gearshift switching switch is a lever switch, and the parking switch is a push button switch.

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8. The operation apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the gearshift range is directly switched to the parking range regardless of the present gearshift range if the parking switch is pushed when the velocity of the vehicle is zero.

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9. The operation apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the vehicle includes an instrument panel, a driver seat, and a passenger seat, and the operation apparatus is arranged in an instrument panel between the driver seat and the passenger seat.

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10. The operation apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the engine operator includes a push button switch operated to switch between a plurality of functional positions for an engine including a functional position for starting the engine and a functional position for stopping the engine.

11. A control system for a drive system of a vehicle including a passenger compartment, an engine, and a transmission, the control system comprising:

10 an authorized key capable of performing communication;
a gearshift operator arranged in the passenger compartment;

an engine operator arranged near the gearshift operator;

15 a shutter for covering the gearshift operator and the engine operator;

a communication circuit capable of communicating with the authorized key; and

a controller connected to the communication circuit,
20 the gearshift operator, and the engine operator to control the transmission in accordance with the operation of the engine operator, the controller invalidating the operation of the gearshift operator and the engine operator when communication with the authorized key is not established.

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12. The system according to claim 11, wherein the controller keeps the shutter in a closed state to cover the gearshift operator and the engine operator when the engine is stopped and the communication between the vehicle and the
30 authorized key is not established, and opens the shutter to expose the gearshift operator and the engine operator when the communication is established.

13. The system according to claim 11, wherein the gearshift operator and the engine operator each includes a switch for generating a signal representing a present operation state.

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14. The system according to claim 11, wherein the gearshift operator includes a plurality of switches, each associated with at least one of a plurality of gearshift ranges of the transmission, the plurality of switches including:

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a lever for switching gearshift ranges of the transmission in a sequential manner, wherein the lever is normally located at a neutral position, operated and moved to an upward position or a downward position from the neutral position, and returned to the neutral position after being operated; and

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a push button switch for switching directly to a parking range from the present gearshift range.

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15. The system according to claim 14, wherein the engine operator includes a push button switch operated to switch between a plurality of functional positions for an engine including a functional position for starting the engine and a functional position for stopping the engine.

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16. A control system for a drive system of a vehicle including an engine and a transmission, the control system comprising:

an authorized key capable of performing communication;

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a gearshift operator operated to change a gearshift range of the transmission and generate a first operation signal;

an engine operator arranged near the gearshift operator

and operated to control operation of the engine and generate a second operation signal;

a cover movable between a closed position at which the cover covers the gearshift operator and the engine operator
5 and an opened position at which the cover exposes the gearshift operator and the engine operator;

a cover drive circuit for driving the cover; and

a vehicle control unit connected to the gearshift operator, the engine operator, and the cover drive circuit,
10 the vehicle control unit including a communication circuit capable of communicating with the authorized key, the vehicle control unit opening the cover, enabling operation of the gearshift operator and the engine operator, and controlling the engine and the transmission in accordance
15 with the first and second operation signals when predetermined conditions, including establishment of wireless communication between the communication circuit and the authorized key, are satisfied, and the vehicle control unit keeping the cover closed and disabling operation of the
20 gearshift operator and the engine operator at least when wireless communication between the communication circuit and the authorized key is not established.

17. The system according to claim 16, wherein the gearshift operator includes a plurality of switches, each
25 associated with at least one of a plurality of gearshift ranges of the transmission, the plurality of switches including:

a lever for switching gearshift ranges of the transmission in a sequential manner, wherein the lever is
30 normally located at a neutral position, operated and moved to an upward position or a downward position from the neutral position, and returned to the neutral position after

being operated; and

a push button switch for switching directly to a parking range from the present gearshift range.